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## DISEASES OF THE THROAT

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Diseases of the larynx were formerly quite common. Of late years they have considerably decreased in number. As laryngeal diseases are largely due to diseased structures higher up, or to mechanical obstructions in the nose or throat, the decrease in laryngeal disturbances is easily explained.

Acute laryngitis is an inflammation in or about the vocal cords. Its principle symptom is the loss of voice. It is seldom accompanied with pain, and the loss of voice depends upon the severity of the inflammation. The degree varies from huskiness to complete inability to make a sound. Laryngitis in the acute form is not a dangerous matter. It is more or less apt to follow any common head cold or acute inflammation in the nose or throat.

Chronic laryngitis, on the other hand, is often very serious and its presence indicates serious involvement of the laryngeal structures. Syphilis, tuberculosis and malignant growths are the common causes.

Tubercular laryngitis is usually secondary to pulmonary tuberculosis. It is rarely a primary disease. It usually develops late in the course of pulmonary tuberculosis. In the early stages huskiness of voice is usually the first symptom to appear. In the average case the inflammation slowly grows worse and after a time difficulty in swallowing and pain develop. Patients with tubercular disease of the larynx suffer greatly. During the past few years much has been done to relieve the suffering, but it requires the services of physicians particularly skilled in this art to relieve or cure the unfortunate victims of tubercular laryngitis.

Syphilis of the larynx is not uncommon. The possibility of this disease is *always* to be suspected in any case of chronic laryngitis.

Malignant growths involving the larynx are frequent. In cases of advanced age, this is probably the most common cause of laryngeal disease.

*Foreign bodies in the larynx, trachea, bronchial tubes and esophagus.* All manner of small objects may find their way into the above structures and lodge there. With such a condition present the result is serious. Coins, pins, collar buttons, tacks, small nails, etc., are often held in the mouth by certain individuals who acquire this pernicious habit. A sudden, forcible inspiration may suck one of the small bodies

into the larynx. Coughing may fail to expel it but further inspiration may draw it still further down into the respiratory tract, where it permanently lodges. Literally hundreds of such small foreign bodies have been taken from the larynx, trachea or bronchial tubes of both adults and children, during the past few years. The first case I had in my service at the Boston City Hospital this year was a five cent piece firmly lodged in the larynx of a small child. The coin had been there for three days, and was firmly embedded in the oedema of the surrounding tissues. An X-ray photograph showed it plainly, and it was removed without great difficulty.

Foreign bodies in the respiratory tract are likely to cause septic pneumonia, though it is amazing how long they may remain there without causing distressing symptoms. Recently, while riding upon a train, a stranger with whom I was talking told me he and his wife were returning from Pittsburgh where his wife had recently undergone a marvelous operation. It seems that the lady had inhaled a large-headed pin five years before, and had little or no trouble from it until recently. The gentleman told me that the pin was removed in five pieces, and that a special instrument was devised and made to remove the head of the pin which was the last fragment to be withdrawn. This remarkable feat was performed by Dr. Chevalaer Jackson of Pittsburgh, who is acknowledged to be the leading operator in the field of bronchoscopy in this country.

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#### WOMEN AND CANCER

Between the ages of 35 and 45 three times as many American women as men die of cancer, between the ages of 45 and 55 twice as many. Generally speaking, the excessive mortality among women is due to cancer of the breast and of the generative organs. These forms of the disease, like others, are curable by qualified treatment in the early stages.—*American Society for the Control of Cancer.*